

Linda Clair
Ten-day Meditation Retreat
Kallara Conference Centre, Australia – July 2021
Transcription from Audio Recordings

FILE 5B – Morning discussion

Linda: How are you going L.?

Question: It's hard to describe – just a garbage heap of thoughts, which seem to be completely out of control, and a lot of very negative stuff that seems to be a deep habit in my life. Sometimes, this retreat particularly, I've been feeling like I don't know if I've got the strength, or the energy, or the determination to keep on. I don't know. It's like the present is really not very satisfying, not enjoyable. I don't feel like I get very much pleasure or enjoyment out of life but there is no alternative but to keep going. It's felt like a real struggle so far, till this morning. But the only way out, or way in – the only decision that is easy to make is coming to the retreat and being here and just somehow persevering. I feel often that my determination – I really struggle with that.

So, it's been a really difficult first few days. But I could remember that it always changes in the retreats and it does get easier, and that doom and gloom and, "I can't do it, and I don't want to do it, I want to be somewhere else," does ease off a little bit. So of course, that's what started to happen this morning. And the pain – I get really scared of sitting for a long period and I've been reluctant to do it. It's not particularly bad pain but I feel like my tolerance for pain has become less rather than more. But it sort of becomes clearer I suppose, that it is just sitting and watching whatever is happening and trying to stay here, whether I'm counting or trying to count, or trying to be in my body or whatever. Just sitting here in my body it does change.

This morning I've been trying to count, after your reminder yesterday. Somehow that worked for a little while, but then the thoughts just took over, before I even started counting. Then this morning I was just sitting and watching whatever I could. I noticed if I get carried away with some sort of thinking, and then I think, "Oh, I'll come back to counting," that never worked. I realised when I decided to do something I was *thinking*, then thoughts took over from there and I was lost immediately. So what I started to do was not even think about it. If I realised I was thinking I'd just count. So it was a bit like what you talk about sometimes – you don't have to think to do something, you know what's next to be done.

Linda: So that's your intelligence coming in, overriding the thinking, going, "No." And you just do certain things. There's not this – "I think I'm going to do this because I want to get something from it." Even the counting – "I want it to work, because I don't want to be thinking." But when it suddenly starts clicking in, or you're feeling lost and suddenly you remember, "Oh, there's the counting," and do it. When you say it doesn't work it really means maybe that it doesn't work the way you want it to work. But just the fact that you're counting is enough. You do have to make an effort and you do have to persevere. So don't think, "I'll start counting and that will sort out the thinking." It won't straight

away. You have to keep doing it, and sometimes for a whole sitting. I'd also apply it if you're in-between sittings, when you're walking down the road, whatever you're doing, start counting rather than using that time to let it go into dreamland. Keep reining it in during the retreat, keep doing that. Every time you realise you've just floated off again bring it back, and you've got to really keep doing it.

But when you get to the point where there's no choice – you're not getting much pleasure out of the things that used to give you pleasure in life – it can feel a bit yuk, but it's what keeps you going. That, "What else have I got? What have I got to lose?" Because that stuff doesn't do it for you anymore. It might to a degree, it might be mildly pleasant, but it doesn't do much for you. You realise that you have based your life on doing things like that, some sort of aim – "I do this and I feel like this, I feel pleasure." You're always trying to get it, and avoiding the pain. So this is catching up with all the pain that you've been repressing and trying to override by thinking, using pleasure, whatever. So it's incredibly difficult, because it feels like a desert, there's no oasis, there's no reward – you might get the occasional glimpse at times – but it will change. If you keep putting the pressure on during this retreat things will change, but you have to keep the pressure on. Have rests in between, and that's really important too, to have rests where you go and lie down. Not just daydreaming but proper rest, where you're not doing this so much but try and stay present. It does feel relentless but this is ten days out of your life. If you really apply it during this ten days you will feel the effects.

But I understand it is hard because you don't feel like you're getting any reward, you're not getting any pleasure. And if you're used to doing that in our life – thinking life is about getting as much pleasure as possible, which we're taught to do, really – it's difficult when that goes. You can tend to think that's a form of depression but it's not, it's just the withdrawals from what you're used to. You can feel very flat for a while but that changes, it really does. But it's very difficult going into something, just doing it, without getting a reward for it because that's what we're used to. You do get it eventually. And you'll feel it after this, as I keep saying to people. But during – maybe, maybe not, you'll feel it much more afterwards.

What you start to feel is more of a depth and a reason for being here. You start to realise, "This is why I'm here." It's not simply to have fun or pleasure, or whatever. That's all fine – and it doesn't mean you're not going to feel that again, but it will be in a different way. The intention will be different.

But when you realise why you're here in this body all that other stuff doesn't matter, it really becomes secondary. And that is the main thing – "I'm here because of this." You stop looking for a depth in anything. So that's what this is all about – realising why you're here. So you don't need to keep justifying your existence or finding a reason to live – you find a reason, you realise why you're here. And everyone expresses that in different ways. Of course, not everyone becomes a teacher like this, they do in different ways.

But keep going. Like you said, what choice have you got? Can't go back.

Question: There's nothing to go back to really. It's just sort of here. I keep thinking about the future, deciding to do something. Even like, "Oh, now I'll start counting," is not even working.

Linda: Look at the intention behind everything you do. "Now I'll start counting so I can... whatever." Just start counting. You sit, and come back when you can, but the main thing is that you're here, sitting.

This is a very intense, difficult practice because there's not all the frills and entertainment that quite a few practices have. The only thing that you have to look forward to really is lunch or breakfast or dinner. Otherwise there's...

Question: A biscuit occasionally.

Linda: Yes, a biscuit, chocolate one maybe, two. And you start to go, "This is what my life has come to – looking forward to a chocolate biscuit, the highlight of my day." But in a way that's what happens. The highlight of your day does become the little things like that. Not conquering Everest or working out something; it's these very small things that become, "Oh, that's a nice little treat." Because all that stuff becomes pretty meaningless.

So, you've come this far, keep going. Never give up – you can't give up now.

Question: In the early morning sit this morning I could see for the very first time that it's not the thinking that sees the thinking. I always think, even before I come back from thinking, I have the thought to come back. But a few times this morning there wasn't a preceding thought to come back, I just was back. What you said the other day about how you realised it wasn't you who was seeing all of that. It's such a conundrum of what sees it, because I've always thought it's my mind that sees it, but it's not.

Linda: It's your intelligence. And it's almost the same as what L. was saying. He didn't think to come back, he just came back to the counting.

Question: I don't get what I'm doing here, I'm just sitting here – seeing kangaroos having lunch in the rain and not caring – I don't get life.

Linda: You don't get it until you get it, and then you don't question it. Peter used to say, "If you think you've got it you haven't got it," and it was true. If there is any sort of doubt or question, no. But you have to *want* to get it to keep going. And you don't know what it is – you know less and less. You think you're going to become clearer and surer about what's happening but you become less sure. And that's why it's so important to be in your body, because all that stuff that you thought was true you see, "Ah, it's not. So where do I stand?" You have to have that foundation to support you while all that other stuff is falling away and you realise, "I don't know anything, I'm not sure about anything anymore; I thought I was, I thought I knew why I was doing this." But until you realise this, until the big realisation happens, you don't know. You can only speculate and think about it, and you've got no idea. And then it's amazing – you suddenly realise everything, every little thing.

So just keep going. Again, that's all you can do. And something is keeping you going and it's that longing for reality, that longing for truth, for something other than this, because this is not enough

anymore. For some people it does seem to be enough and there were times when I wished I was one of those people, I wished I was normal and this was enough – just all the normal stuff. But it wasn't, for whatever reason. It's the same for anyone here – it's not enough. And that's what keeps you going, because you've got nothing to lose anymore, because this doesn't do anything. Even looking at the kangaroos, that's nice, but so what. People talk about the meaning of life – what you're looking for is the meaning of *your* life – why are you here? And that's what you realise, and then everything else just slots into place, gradually. Because when you realise that it's such a big shock it takes years to integrate it into your life.

So I'd say don't look at what's looking, just look, just watch.

Question: This morning in all of that there wasn't just that one thing. I had also the feeling that my mind is like a surveillance machine that kind of watches me.

Linda: It's true, and it knows you intimately because you have created it, you have fed it. It knows what's going to get you upset, it knows everything about you. That's why it's so hard to extricate yourself from it because it's like you're doing that from yourself. And nobody wants to do that, they want to keep themselves, or bits of themselves. But everything has to go. Gradually, gradually it starts to happen. And rather than fighting it and saying, "This is bad, I don't want it," you start to realise what it is, and it's really a very inferior intelligence. It's not very intelligent at all – this thing that we've lived with and believed and trusted for most of our lives – it's not very intelligent. It's clever, devious, knows all this stuff, but it's got no power in the unknown, it can't exist in the unknown, it can't exist in now. And that's why it keeps fighting to try and hang on to you, saying, "This is not possible for you. Maybe someone else but not you, because I am you, and I'm going to keep you for as long as I can – without you I don't exist." So it will keep fighting. But your intelligence, your pure intelligence, what's bringing you here doing this, is far superior. And it's in your body. Your real intelligence is in your body, in the brain, which is part of your body and that's why this is all about the body.

So again, keep going. You've got another five days. What could happen? Anything could happen. How exciting that you've got another five days of doing this. But try not to expect anything.

Question: After we talked yesterday, I felt desperate to get somewhere, wherever – I don't know where it is. And I thought, I must be more obedient to you.

Linda: To me. (laughing)

Question: Well, not to you but to what you're teaching.

Linda: Yes, it's not me personally, I'm just this body. I'm not doing this for myself, that's what you've got to trust. It might appear that I am at times, but it's not for me. It used to be but not anymore.

Question: When you first started teaching?

Linda: Well, there was still a bit of me there when I first started. Not much, but there's much less now. But I'm talking more about before – I did everything for me before. But when I first started teaching, yes, there was more there than there is now.

Question: Well, I decided that if I wanted to succeed – that's a silly word – that I had to do what you taught. So I started yesterday afternoon, and then this morning my body is much more relaxed. My mind is allowing my body to do the things that I'm supposed to.

Linda: Well actually B., that's a really profound thing, and it's a big part of this. That's what I did with my teacher. It didn't happen straight away; it wasn't until I started to feel this trust in him with this, because I realised he wasn't doing it for himself. It was a huge part of why I did this, and why this happened – I surrendered to him. I knew it wasn't to him personally, again, it was to this – and he represented this, he represented my potential. And I just surrendered to him.

My partner didn't like that at all, he thought I was being stupid. He said it was dumbing me down at times, but it wasn't, I was actually becoming more intelligent. But I wasn't like that before, not at all. I was quite: "I can do it my way, I can do it better." So for me, surrendering to someone was a huge thing, but it just happened, it just suddenly happened, I had no control over it. And it worked. I realised: "He is enlightened, I am not." It was this basic thing – I'm not enlightened, he is. He is giving me this practice that to me seems very logical.

And I tested it in my experience and things started happening very quickly. So I felt, "What have I got to lose?" He wasn't telling me to do weird things or anything, he was just giving me this basic practice. I trusted him implicitly and did whatever he suggested because I realised more and more that he was in this state, and he was doing this for me, not for him. And I wanted this more than anything and it became stronger and stronger. I was willing to do anything. So in regards to this I did whatever he suggested because I trusted him, and I still trust him.

Question: I think I was lazy, or I am lazy perhaps.

Linda: Well, there is also resistance to doing what you said, and what I just described, with someone, particularly in the West. In the East people do it all the time – it seems to be accepted. In the West – suspicion, "Cult! What are you doing? You're letting someone take you over," that sort of thing. Whereas it's not that at all. Actually what I'm doing is empowering you so that you're not controlled by your mind anymore. It's not that I am controlling you, I'm giving you the power to be able to become free from this controlling entity that you've been a slave to for most of your life, and to see it very clearly. Surrendering gives it this... I always felt it would have been so hard without someone there. Even when I started teaching I really missed my teacher. I started to realise how much he did for me and how much I relied on him, and I really missed it. Suddenly I was on my own and it was only then that I realised what he had done for me. A bit like when you become a parent – you only fully realise what your parents have done when you start doing it too. And it was the same with teaching – I didn't appreciate fully what he had done. I thought I had, but not until then.

Question: I feel like I haven't actually appreciated what you're trying to do for me.

Linda: That's okay, it doesn't matter, and I don't expect you to. It's not like I want you to. I just want you to keep doing this and realise your potential.

Question: And have you realised that I haven't been trying very hard?

Linda: (laughs a lot)

Question: You're not going to answer that?

Linda: You haven't given me a chance. I feel like you have been working very hard B..

Question: Well, I haven't worked as hard as I could.

Linda: Well, what you just said then was a big thing.